

Muhammad is ... the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets ..."—Holy Qur-ān, 33 : 40
 "There will be no Prophet after me."—Muhammad.

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The photo shows a part of the audience near the dais that attended the reception held in honour of the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad by the Muslim Society in Great Britain on Saturday, May 22, 1937, at the Grosvenor House, London, at 4.30 p.m. His Royal Highness the Amir Saud was in the chair.

The full details of the occasion appear in this issue.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَلِيقَ النَّبِيِّينَ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XXV.]

RABI'UT-THANI, 1356 A.H.

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A DECLARATION

I (Mr.) Bert Delmar, of Palmer Avenue, Detroit, U.S.A., do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship one and only one Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha il-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul-Allah

(There is but one God Allah and Muhammad is God's Messenger.)

(SD.) B. ABDUL KARIM DELMAR.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY IN LONDON

As our readers are well aware, the crowning event connected with the Muslim Society in Great Britain is the annual celebration of the birthday of the Holy Prophet. This year the anniversary was celebrated at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, on Saturday, 22nd May 1937, at 4-30 p.m. A large gathering of over three hundred Muslims and non-Muslims from all over the world participated. The oversea visitors for the Coronation no doubt contributed their quota to its being a picturesque and a cosmopolitan gathering. Some of our enthusiastic new Muslim sisters and brothers had come from the farthest corners of England. The reception began about 4-15 p.m., when friends of all denominations began to pour in and were received by Madame Khalida Buchanan Hamilton, the President of the Society and the hostess of the evening. The lady was assisted by the Imam Aftab-ud-Din Ahmed Sahib of the Mosque, Woking, as also by Mr. Ismail De Yorke, the Chairman of the Society.

At 5 p.m., Mr. De Yorke and the Imam Sahib, leaving Mr. Sirajuddin Piraha and Mr. Tirmizey, the Treasurer of the Society, in their places, proceeded to start the meeting. Mr. Ismail De Yorke, in requesting His Royal Highness the Amir Saud, the Crown-Prince of Saudi Arabia, to take the chair, said: "We are honoured to have Your Royal Highness as our President not only because you are the Crown Prince of one of the important Muslim States but also because you are the son of the King that has the rare privilege of ruling over the places that are most sacred in the Muslim eye—I mean the holy places of Mecca and Medina." After taking the chair, His Royal Highness in his opening speech said that he was happy and highly honoured to be

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invited to preside over this solemn meeting. He congratulated the Society in its efforts, and wished it every success.

The proceedings commenced with the recital of Al-Qurán by Imam Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad. The Imam gave an English translation of the recitation. His Royal Highness then called upon Al Hajja Aisha Fitzwilliam to speak. This lady told the audience that she was going to speak more for the non-Muslims, who were not so well acquainted with the noble character of the Prophet Muhammad. In a short but remarkably appropriate speech she stressed the courage, loyalty, kindness and generosity to a fallen foe of the Prophet Muhammad. She concluded her short speech by a most apt quotation from the writings of Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, in testimony to what she had said. Al Hajja Aisha was followed by Al Hajj Abdullah Philby, who spoke in Arabic. He was followed by Sir Abdul Qadir, who characterized the meeting as an assembly to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of the greatest man in the history of the world. Referring to the American colour bar, the Honourable speaker said it was Muhammad who broke all this distinction of colour and creed. In concluding his speech he congratulated the Society and wished them every luck in carrying on the noble work they had so heroically undertaken. The President then called upon Begum Ameeruddin Sahiba, who is here to represent Islam in the World Congress of Faiths, to speak. The Begum Sahiba laid great stress on the equality and status that the Holy Prophet gave to women—a status which never till his time had been extended to them. The last, but not the least, speaker was Imam Sahib of the Mosque, Woking, who said that although Islam came some 600 years after Christianity, yet the Muslims to-day number from four hundred mil-

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lions to six hundred millions—and include all the nations of the world. The day's gathering, he added, with its English Muslim Al Hajjs as speakers, was a sufficient proof that Islam had entered into the West in a very real sense. In his opinion real praise of man lies in its just appreciation, and not in either exaggerating his position or belittling it. In the case of Muhammad it is done by the Muslims at least five times a day. It is announced by the Muezzin from thousands of Mosques from the extreme West (Woking) to the extreme East (Kobe) that Muhammad is the Prophet of God. Referring to the Western writers the Imam said that if all the writings of the European authors who wrote from time to time were searched we would find that if one author denounced one quality of the Prophet another holds it up, and if all of them were read *collectively* the prophethood of Muhammad would be found to have been *practically* admitted.

In conclusion Mr. Haroun Rashid, General Secretary, while thanking the Chairman and those present, said that he would be failing in his duty if he did not take the opportunity of thanking all the Muslim Ambassadors and Legations for the kind support and patronage which they had extended to the Society from time to time.

The President then declared the meeting closed, and the gathering was served with tea.

Thus passed another memorable function organized by the Society.

Among those present were: His Royal Highness Amir Saud, Crown-Prince of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Amir Mohammad of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Prince Saif-ul-Islam of Yemen; Their Highnesses the Sultan and Sultana of Johore; His Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar; His Highness the Sultan of

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Shihir and Mukalla; His Highness the Sultan of Lahaj; His Highness the Sultan of Pahang; Her Highness Princess Naima; His Highness Sultan Mohammad bin Omar; Their Excellencies the Turkish Ambassador and Madame Fethi Okyar; His Excellency the Egyptian Ambassador; His Excellency the Iranian Ambassador; His Excellency the Saudi Arabian Ambassador; His Excellency the Iraqi Minister; Hon. Catherine Lady Headley; Lady Blomfield; Sir Akbar Hydari; Sir Abdur Rahim; Sir Abdul and Lady Qadir; Sir Firoz Khan Noon; Sir Shadi Lal; Amir Adil Arslan; Nawab Zulqadar Jung Bahadur; Nawab Nazr Jung Bahadur; Justice Niamatullah; Justice Ameen-ud-Din and Begum Ameen-ud-Din; Mr. Jamal Huseni; Khan Bahadur Sheikh Ali Baaleza; Captain and Mrs. Al A. Noon; Mian and Begum Muhammad Rafi; Khan Bahadur Syed Ahsan Ali; Mrs. Marmaduke Pickthall; Miss Margaret Farquharson; Dr. Hari Parsad and Madam Shastri; Madam Tirmizey; Dr. and Mrs. Shakir Mohammedi; Dr. and Mrs. Saeed Mohammedi; Mr. S. D. Piracha; Risaldar Muzaffar Khan; Risaldar Major Bahadur Sher Khan.

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

By C. A. SOORMA

[This article is the first of the series which we are going to publish from the pen of Mr. C. A. Soorma—Ed. I. R.]

CHAPTER I

SHORT SKETCH OF EARLY HISTORY

In this Chapter, I shall, first of all, describe the geographical situation of Arabia.

Arabia is a vast peninsula in the south-west of Asia, bounded on the north by the great Syro-Babylonian plain, on the north-east by the Persian Gulf and the Sea

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of Oman, on the south by the Indian Ocean and on the west by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Suez. Its length from north-west to south-east is about 1,800 miles, its mean breadth about 600 miles, its area, approximately, 1,200,000 square miles and its population is estimated at 5,000,000. Roughly speaking, it exhibits a central tableland surrounded by a series of deserts and numerous scattered oases. Around the coast lines and parallel to them are ranges of mountains with narrow rims, of low-lying grounds between them and the sea. It is said that Arabia is a continuation of the great desert of Sahara. It resembles the Sahara to a great extent. It has vast wastes of loose sand, its stretches of bare rocks and stones, its mountains and hills devoid of any vegetation, while its oases with their wells and streams and their palm groves and cultivated fields are "like islands of green amidst the surrounding desolation."

The climate of Arabia is marked by extreme heat and dryness. Vast tracts of land are nothing but sandy deserts and are barren. But there are some grassy pastures suitable for grazing cattle. Date palm is the principal article of food. The Arabs love it. Among the cereals may be mentioned wheat, barley, maize and millet. Water melons, grapes, apples, etc., are grown mostly in the hinterland, while tobacco, coffee, olives, etc., are cultivated in various parts of the country, especially in the south-west.

I think it will be proper here to give a brief account of Arabia before Islam. The Arabs belong to the great Semitic race. Jews in great numbers had migrated into Arabia after the destruction of Jerusalem. It is not possible to describe here in detail the various tribes and races who composed the bulk of the population of Arabia before Islam. Ameer Ali, in the Introduction to his work, "The Spirit of Islam," has reviewed the early history of Arabia in a masterly manner.

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Briefly stated, it appears that the Jews had brought into Arabia a form of Judaism, while a number of tribes professed Jacobite and Nestorian Christianity. Magism and Sabaism had also their representatives among the Arabs, while the worship of Mercury, Jupiter and Canopus was also common in some parts. Among the powerful tribes of the Quraish, the three moon-goddesses known as *Al-Lat*, meaning the "bright moon;" *Al-Manat*, meaning the "dark moon" and *Al-Uzza*, meaning the union of the two, were also worshipped. These were regarded as "the daughters of the high god *Banat-Ullah*."

It is said that the foundation of Mecca took place about the same time as Abrahamitic Arabs migrated into the Peninsula. The temple of the *Kaaba*, which gave Mecca that singular importance which has not only not been dimmed but has remained predominant to this day, was said to have been built by Abraham, that Saturnian father of the tribes! From the remotest antiquity the *Kaaba* ever remained the holiest and most sacred of the temples of the nations. "Here were ranged the three hundred and sixty idols, one for each day, round the great god Hobal carved of red agate, the two *Ghazalas* or gazelles of gold and silver, and the image of Abraham and his son. Here the tribes came, year after year "to kiss the black stone which had fallen from heaven in the primeval days of Adam and to make the seven circuits of the temple naked" (Ameer Ali, "The Spirit of Islam," pp. LXI-LXIV).

There is no doubt that from remote antiquity Mecca became the centre not only of religious associations but also of great commercial activity. It had gathered to itself the wealth and culture of the neighbouring countries and from earliest times the Arabs had become the carriers of the nations of the world. Because Mecca was the pivot round which the cultural, social

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and commercial life of the Arabs revolved, there is no doubt that all the luxurious habits, degrading customs, morals and vices found their way into the city from the neighbouring countries. The Arabs, and especially the Meccans, were passionately addicted to drinking. Strong alcoholic drinks were regularly and frequently indulged in, while gambling in every form and shape had become a common pastime of the people. The Arabs were fond of music, singing and dancing and various poets vied with one another in composing poems not only of the joys of the present life but also encouraging the immorality of the people. In this connection, I should like to place before you a striking picture of the life of the Arabs so clearly painted by Ameer Ali:

“The Arabs, especially the Meccans, were passionately addicted to drinking, gambling and music. Dancing and singing as in other Eastern countries were practised by a class of women occupying a servile position, who were called *Kiyan* or, in the singular, *Kayna* and whose immorality was proverbial. And yet they were held in the highest estimation and the greatest chiefs paid public court to them. As among the Hindus, polygamy was practised to an unlimited extent. A widow (other than the mother) was considered an integral part of her deceased husband's patrimony and passed into the use of the son; and the atrocious and inhuman practice of burying the female infants was universal” (Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, p. LXV).

Human sacrifices were frequent especially in honour of the *Kaaba*. Besides the special idols located in the temples, each family had household gods and goddesses which were religiously worshipped.

No student of history can shut his eyes or be blind to the depraved condition of Arabia before the advent of the Prophet. Besides gross licentiousness and immo-

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rality, the Arabs were steeped in superstition, idolatry and fanaticism.

The spiritual influences of Judaism and Christianity and the teachings of the earlier Prophets had all been either forgotten or deliberately ignored. There was no peace in the land. Tribal and internecine warfare were the order of the day, and men fought and killed one another on the slightest pretext. Blood feuds, family feuds and tribal jealousies had taken an immense toll of human life and had caused great misery and suffering to many people. Human life and freedom were not at all safe. Tribal raids on innocent and peaceful neighbours were a fruitful source to provide food, materials and slaves, and they were frequently indulged in. The social structure of the Arabs was rotten to the core as immorality and vice had corrupted a whole nation. The lot of the slave was indeed pitiable.

They were put to death at the mere whim and pleasure of their masters and there was no one in the land to denounce the inhuman treatment and cruelty meted out to them.

The Arabs of those days boasted of their cruelty, vices and ignorance and they feared neither man nor God in the pursuit of pleasure.

In short, Arabia was sunk in barbarism, ignorance and licentiousness unparalleled in the history of any nation, and even the bitterest opponent of Islam cannot but admit that the advent of the Prophet wrought a miracle in the life of the Arabs. How far the Prophet succeeded in rescuing the Arabs from the degrading and depraved condition in which they had sunk will be discussed in the following Chapters.

(To be continued.)

THE QURANIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

BY THE HON'BLE SHEIKH MUSHIR HUSSAIN KIDWAI
OF GADIA, BARRISTER-AT-LAW

(Continued from Vol. XXV, Page 202)

Up to this day the Bolsheviks found the Russian Muzhik very superstitious and it was for this reason that they looked down with contempt on Christianity and with it on all other religions.

We assert once more that we do not think that any nation in the world can up to this day claim to have been more cultured and civilized than the Islamic Nation.

Islam had chosen the Arabic language, the language of the Arab Quraish, for itself at its start and made that language the richest at one time. All that was good in any language, whether in Greek, or Latin, or even in Sanskrit or Persian, was introduced either by adaptation or translation into Arabic. There was a time when the Arabic language became the custodian of the best culture in the world. All the sciences, arts and literature known to Europe, Asia or Africa were available in it. The Arab Khalifas possessed the best libraries. The catalogue of one library alone was in forty volumes. Stupendous sums were given to authors. Besides big universities in every important country under Islam, every large mosque had its own schools and its own libraries. The places for the worship of God thus became the seats of learning, education and culture.

The biggest library of the day was the Muslim Library in Spain founded by Hakam Mustanzar. The description and account of this library, as given by the historian Ibn Khaldun, baffles one's imagination.

Hakam was a famous Khalifa of the Umayyad dynasty who ruled in Spain. His empire was extensive and well regulated. He was a scholar with a wide out-

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look, and was so very fond of collecting books that even the tribute paid to his kingdom did not suffice for the purpose. Hundreds of his emissaries and merchants were deputed by him to search for and collect rare good books, both old and new, in Spain, Egypt, Syria, Baghdad, Persia and Khorasan.

The Cairo Library equalled and to some extent surpassed the Spanish Library. Maqrizi describes this library graphically. It possessed the globe of the world prepared by Batlimus (Ptolemy). It also possessed another globe of the world prepared by Abu'l Hasan Sufi for Sultan Adad-u'd-Daula.

Nizam-u'l-Mulk founded the Nizamiyyah University at Baghdad. It is the same Nizam-u'l-Mulk who was a class fellow of Omar Khayyam and Hasan bin Sabbah. It would ever redound to the memory of Nizam-u'l-Mulk that he promulgated a royal edict, that wherever a distinguished savant was available, a Madrassah and a library should be built for him.

Thus thousands of Madrassahs and libraries came into existence. Their existence was the order of the day. Even mosques were used as libraries, and the traces of this may yet be seen in Istanbul where all big mosques have large libraries.

Adad-u'd-Daula Library of Shiraz was another renowned library. One of its features was that it contained all books written from the advent of the Holy Prophet of Arabia up to the founder's time. Bashari is responsible for bringing this unique library to the notice of the world. It has been described thus:

. . . This grand library was located in one of the palatial buildings of Adad-u'd-Daula. The building was very long and extensive, and contained several big rooms stocked with hundreds of high *almirahs* kept by the side of the walls. These *almirahs* were three yards broad

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and of a man's height. There was fine carving on the *almirahs*. There were separate rooms for books on each religion and for each art and science. There were separate lists of books for each room. *Wakil* (Agent), *Khazanchi* (cashier) and accountants were employed to manage and administer this library. No person could enter this library unless accompanied by a member of the Library Establishment.

Saif-u'd-Daula's Library was the popular rendezvous of the scholars of the day. Saif-u'd-Daula was a highly accomplished man. Hakim Abu Nasr Fārābi was a stipendiary of his court. "Books on literature found in his library were not to be found elsewhere."

Love of books and libraries was not the monopoly of the Muslim rulers and sovereigns only. It became the popular hobby of the learned and the rich. Muslims searched for the old and rare books and secured them wherever they could be had even at fabulous prices. Libraries sprang up not only in Muslim Spain and Egypt, but also in Persia, Iraq, Syria, Khorasan and in India.

It was in the fourth century of the Hijra that public libraries became the order of the day. Amir Sabur bin Ardashir was probably the first Muslim who founded a public library. In 382 H. he founded a library called Dar-u'l-u'lum at Baghdad, which was thrown open to the public. In 395 Hijra, Hakam Bin Amr-i'l-lah established a grand public library in Egypt. This library had a very large endowment to meet the salaries of the staff employed in the library. It was open to the public throughout the day.

Most of the Khalifas in Europe, as in Asia, were themselves men of letters. "In the midst of all this luxury," says Draper, "which cannot be regarded by the historian with disdain since in the end it produced a most important result in the south of France, the Spanish

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Khalifas, emulating the example of their Asiatic compeers, and in this strongly contrasting with the Popes of Rome, were not only the patrons, but personal cultivators of all the branches of human learning. One of them was himself the author of a work on polite literature in not less than fifty volumes; another wrote a treatise on Algebra." In India, also, certain Moghul monarchs were great litterateurs and have left, like Humayun, Jehangir and Aurangzeb, classical works of great merit. Their successor in Hyderabad (Deccan) even to-day is a poet, in Persian and Urdu both, and has raised as a monument of his literary taste a novel university in India called the Jamia Osmania at the cost of a very large sum of money, which, though quite up to date, does all the teaching in the Urdu language—the *lingua franca* of India. All other modern universities of India have adopted English for their teaching medium.

Because all the Muslim culture was based on the God-idea they abominated "the lewdness," says Draper, "of our classical mythology, and denounced indignantly any connexion between the licentious, impure Olympian Jove and the Most High God as an insufferable and unpardonable blasphemy. Haroun al Rashid had gratified his curiosity by causing Homer to be translated into Syrian, but he did not venture on rendering the great epics into Arabic. Notwithstanding the aversion to our graceful but not unobjectionable ancient poetry, among them originated the Tensons, or poetic disputations, carried afterward to perfection among the Troubadors; from them, also the Provencals learned to employ jongleurs.

"The Khalifas of the West carried out the precepts of Ali, the fourth successor of Muhammad, in the patronage of literature. They established libraries in all their chief towns; it is said that no fewer than seventy

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were in existence. To every Mosque was attached a public school, in which the children of the poor were taught to read and write, and instructed in the precepts of the Koran. . . . The Muhammadan liberality was in striking contrast with the intolerance of Europe." And Draper exclaims, "Indeed it may be asked whether at this time any European Nation is sufficiently advanced to follow such (Muslim) an example! In the universities some of the professors of polite literature gave lectures on classical Arabic works; others taught rhetoric, or composition, or mathematics, or astronomy. From these institutions many of the practices observed in our colleges were derived. They held commencements, at which poems were read and orations delivered in presence of the public. They had also, in addition to these schools of general learning, professional ones, particularly for medicine."

Like that of their culture, the basis of the unique Islamic civilization was also the same Qur-ánic God-idea. The present-day European civilization is admittedly the creature of Islamic civilization, only its basis has been changed, and therefore all spirituality has gone from it. Because the foundation has thus been weakened the whole edifice has lost its beauty, stability and soundness. It has degenerated. It has cankered. Mr. Paul Robson wrote recently in a London daily: "This is supposed to be a Christian civilization and it is run entirely on non-Christian principles. It is ruled by those who desire power, who desire money, who believe in force. The ideas that are implicit in every action of the great Powers are a continual offence to the Compassionate Face of God." On 6th July 1935, in another paper, Mr. John Solosy wrote: "Two thousand years of Christianity seem to have been in vain since it is the Christian nations who have invented all the modern instruments of war (such

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as poison gas, fluid fire, etc.) to attack or protect themselves from Christian neighbours and have introduced them to non-Christian peoples."

Regarding the diseases of the cankered civilization of Europe, it has been said elsewhere: Undoubtedly Europe is ill—dangerously ill. The moral depravity, the class war, the economic upheavals, the greed of money and of exploitation, the jealous and fiery struggle for supremacy, the cruel blood-sucking of the weak, the mutual envy and suspicion, the relentless fight for the dwindling markets on the one hand and excessive industrial development and sweating factories on the other hand are all unhealthy symptoms.

On the other hand the Islamic civilization was magnificent although it was established with lightning speed.

Hershfeld says: "Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilization such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam."

With the Qur-ánic God-idea the people were not only civilized very quickly, the quality also of their civilization was very high because each individual was God-fearing and bore a high moral character.

It should not be forgotten that Muslim civilization grew up to be an advanced materialistic-cum-spiritualistic civilization. Islam does not recommend ascetism or celibacy or a monastic life. The prayer it has taught is: "O our Rubb grant us beautiful (good) things of this world and of the End (Akhirat)." Islam does not forbid the enjoyment of a good, happy and comfortable life with all the goodly provisions.

The Qur-an says:—O children of Adam! Take your adornment (go decently dressed) to the mosque and eat and drink but not in excess. Surely He does not love the extravagant. Say: who has forbidden the adorn-

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ment (good things) of Allah which He has brought forth (provided in nature) for His servants (all humanity) and the good provisions

Say: My Lord has forbidden indecencies, such of those as are apparent, and such of those as are hidden, and iniquity, and unjust violence (or unjustifiable revolt) VII, 31, 32, 33.

Well has Maulana Rumi said:

*Cheest dunya az Khuda ghafil budan
Nai qimasho, nuqrao, farzando zan.*

What is worldliness? To be forgetful of God, not the possession of wealth, silver, children or wife.

Muslim civilization was different from the Christian, the Buddhist and the Hindu civilizations.

Christ is said to have declared, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to go to heaven."

Calvin said, "Man was unworthy of earth, and polluted this sacred footstool of God."

It was again declared, "The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world."

The more pious a man was in Christianity the more he withdrew himself from society and civilization. Monastic life was supposed to be the best life.

The same was the case with Buddhists. Self-annihilation was the goal of the best of them. They saw nothing but evil and trouble on this earth. And the Brahmans had gone a step further than that. To them the world itself was a delusion. Nothing was real. They urged *Tyag*—separation from all mundane things. The result was that though India was the land of wise and pious men there were very few emblems of civilization in the land. Humayun laments in his autobiography that it is not possible to get any good fruits in India, nor beautiful flowers, nor fine cloth. He says that there is

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no good breed of horses—only small ponies called *tanghan*. He cries out that it is not possible to get even cool iced water. It was the Muslim monarchs who introduced in India even the very preliminary marks and needs of civilization. Among the buildings they have left in India there are such as are recognised to be wonders of the world up to the present day. And there are pleasure gardens which remain unsurpassed up to the present time.

Not in India alone have Muslims left the monuments of their civilization. The Khalifas' palaces in Baghdad were marvellous. In Damascus, too, they were wonderful. "In one of these palaces," says Ibn Batuta, the great Muslim world traveller of old, "a very ingenious clock had been constructed." A bird came out of a niche and left balls corresponding to the hour of the time. In another palace coloured glasses rotated to indicate the time.

Wherever Muslims went they introduced a civilization of the highest possible order.

Cordova in Spain, under Muslim rule, possessed more than two hundred thousand houses and a population of over a million. A man could walk through it in a straight line for ten miles by the light, after sunset, of public lamps. This was at a period seven hundred years after which there was not one public lamp in London—the biggest city of the world to-day. The possession of public lamps was not the only feature of Cordova's civilization. Its streets were solidly paved, but in the town of Paris, which is considered to be the most beautiful town of our days, "whoever stepped over his threshold on a rainy day stepped up to his ankles in deep mud."

And who does not admire the famous Alhambra—the almost only architectural monument left out of

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hundreds by the Vandals who succeeded the Muslim Rulers in Spain?

Professor Draper thus describes the grandeur of Muslim palaces and civilization: "Other cities, as Granada, Seville, Toledo, considered themselves rivals of Cordova. The palaces of Khalifas were magnificently decorated. Those sovereigns might well look down with supercilious contempt on the dwellings of the rulers of Germany, France and England which were scarcely better than stables, chimneyless, windowless and with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape, like the wigwams of certain Indians. The Spanish Muhammadans had brought with them all the luxuries and prodigalities of Asia. Their residences stood forth against the clear blue sky, or were embosomed in woods. They had polished marble balconies, overhanging orange gardens; courts with cascades of water, shady retreats provocative of slumber in the heat of the day; retiring-rooms vaulted with stained glass, speckled with gold, over which streams of water were made to gush; the floors and walls were of exquisite mosaic. Here a fountain of quicksilver shot up in a glistening spray, the glittering particles falling with a tranquil sound like fairy bells; there, apartments into which cool air was drawn from the flower-gardens, in summer, by means of ventilating towers and in winter through earthen pipes (even metal pipes were not unknown) or caleducts, imbedded in the walls—the hypocaust, in the vaults below, breathing forth volumes of warmed and perfumed air through these hidden passages. The walls were not covered with wainscot, but adorned with arabesques, and paintings of agricultural scenes and views of Paradise. From the ceilings covered with fretted gold, great chandeliers hung, one of which, it is said, was so large that it contained 1,804 lamps.

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Clusters of frail marble columns surprised the beholder with the vast weight they bore. In the boudoirs of the sultanas they were sometimes of verd antique, and incrustured with lapis-lazuli. The furniture was of sandal and citron wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearls, ivory, silver, or relieved with gold and precious molachite. In orderly confusion were arranged vases of rock crystal, Chinese porcelains and tables of exquisite mosaic. The winter apartments were hung with rich tapestry; the floors were covered with embroidered Persian carpets. Pillows and couches of elegant forms were scattered about the rooms, perfumed with frankincense. Since the representation of the human forms was religiously forbidden, and that source of decoration denied, the imagination of the Saracen architect ran riot with the complicated arabesques he introduced and sought every opportunity of replacing the prohibited works of art by the trophies and rarities of the garden. For this reason the Arabs never produced artists; religion turned them from the beautiful, and made them soldiers, philosophers and men of affairs. Splendid flowers and rare exotics ornamented the courtyards and even the inner chambers. Great care was taken to make due provision for the cleanliness, occupation and amusements of the inmates. Through pipes of metal, water, both warm and cold to suit the season of the year, ran into baths of marble; in niches, where the current of the air could be artificially directed, hung dropping alcarazzas. There were whispering galleries for the amusement of the women, labyrinths and play-courts for the children; for the master himself grand libraries No nation has ever excelled the Spanish Arabs for the beauty and costliness of their pleasure gardens. To them we owe the introduction of very many of our most valuable cultivated fruits, such as the peach."

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This description of the one phase of Islamic civilization by Professor Draper goes on giving further details of Muslim Spain. Only in one respect has Draper misunderstood the Muslim point. He says: "Religion turned them from the beautiful." It was not so. Religion in fact created in those children of the desert, who had been deprived of almost all natural beauties—the acacia and the palm being probably the only trees in the country, and the camel the only animal to fondle and admire—a sense of beauty in all things which no other nation, not even the Persians, surpassed. The Arabs in Spain, or the Turks in Asia Minor, were great admirers of human beauty also. It is not at all right to say that Muslims did not produce artists. What they did not produce was an artist who painted human portraits or made human statues. Otherwise Muslims made fine art the most remarkable part of their civilization. Even in their architecture they have introduced a decorative art of their own. It is quite distinctive. Certain ignorant people have alleged that that miracle in marble, the Taj Mahal of Agra, was built by Italians! An intelligent man need only go and see the front gate of the Taj to detect the contemptible lie of the allegation. Let him only see the caligraphic decoration of a verse from the Holy Qur-án inserted so beautifully in the decorations. It is distinctively Arabic. It is inimitable: it also indicates that Muslim civilization had its foundation in Islam—on the Qur-ánic God-idea.

However, by giving this detailed description of the material civilization of Muslims, it is not meant to say that no other nation developed a material civilization. What is meant is that though Muslim civilization had reached a high point materially, it was still under the control of a moral influence. While in Europe the material civilization developed *in spite of Christianity*,

MUSLIM WOMEN IN HISTORY

the camel drivers of Arabia became the pioneers of a grand and glorious civilization *because of Islam*. And it was for this reason that though it was material, it always remained based upon morality and spirituality.

(To be continued.)

MUSLIM WOMEN IN HISTORY*

By DR. M. Z. SIDDIQI, M.A., B.L., PH.D.

The history of the position of women in our society is as interesting as the woman herself. It is generally accepted, by the authorities on the subject, that in the prehistoric as well as in the primitive period of man's culture, the woman was looked upon as a respectable being having a status either superior or equal to that of the man. But with the dawn of civilization her ungrateful son began to look down upon her as "number two of the human race" in the higher walks of life. "All unfit for what he considered to be Oriental literature, all the ancient sacred books, and books of law, all the Greek and Roman antiquity, all the traditional epics, all that was written during the middle ages and much of the literature of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries," says an English author, "teem with epithets, slurs, flings and open condemnation of women, as beings in some manner vile and hateful, often malicious and evil-disposed and unusually endowed with some superstitious power of evil."

No Status in West

Only with one exception, with which I will presently deal, this passage correctly sums up the attitude of man towards woman in the so-called advanced period of man's past history. A critical study of the literature of Greece and Rome, of Germany, France and England and of many other countries corroborates this

*[Being a lecture delivered at the Calcutta Rotary Club. By courtesy—*The Star of India*.—Ed., I.R.]

ISLAMIC REVIEW

statement. The attitude of Rousseau, the great pioneer of the freedom of man, of John Knox of Scotland, a great reformer, of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the great philosophers, of Shakespeare, Milton and Dryden and of a host of other poets and writers must be well-known to most of you. And who does not know that till recent times, in all the countries of Europe the woman had no legal existence and in most of them she was not allowed a liberal education and the doors of the universities were completely closed to her?

With the Orient, at least with what is now known as the Middle and the Near East, however, the case was quite different. In Egypt, as Mahaffy says, the woman possessed complete legal independence, which appeared to be absurd to the Greeks when they conquered that country; and they passed special law for themselves making the consent of the husband necessary for all the legal acts of the wife. In India, in the pre-Vedic period as Professor Rapson says, woman's position was high and in the Buddhistic period the intellectual and social activities of woman had been of meritorious character, as it has been already shown by Miss Horner, B. C. Law and others.

In the history of Islam, however, since its beginning till the 17th century the woman occupied comparatively high position. We find in the pages of history several cases in which Muslim women commanded armies of two and three thousand men, took part in actual warfare in the battlefields, showed such feats of bravery, archery and swordsmanship, as astounded many of their male compatriots also. They occupied the posts of judges, Qazis and decided legal cases; they controlled the Exchequer; they acted as plenipotentiaries to negotiate peace between warring States; they were held as authorities on law (Muftis) on which their opinions were sought

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and recognised; they pursued with avidity the various branches of arts and literature, travelled far and wide and attended the lectures of learned men in famous centres of learning in towns situated wide apart, and having secured their certificates (Sanads) (one of them is said to have secured a camel-load of them) delivered regular courses of lectures in important madrasas or colleges. They gained great fame as calligraphers (Khatat) and poets, and their mastery in these arts was held to be unsurpassed in their own times.

Unfortunately the time at my disposal does not allow me to give you the names and history of the various Muslim women who distinguished themselves in various capacities in the different periods of history. I will, therefore, take up one particular aspect of their marvellous activities and present to you a short summary of its history by which you will be able to have an idea of their achievements in the other walks of life.

As Scholars of Hadis

In the literary sphere in general and in the cultivation of the Traditions (Hadis) of Islam (the reports of the words and deeds of the Prophet of Islam) which constitutes one of the richest and most important and difficult branches of Arabic literature, women took prominent part throughout the first one thousand years of the history of Islam. Just after the death of Prophet Muhammad, such of his women companions as had the privilege of associating with him closely, delivered lectures on his sayings and doings which were attended by many men and women. These women students in their turn were accepted as authorities on the subject and transmitted their learning to their own students. And when these reports were collected in book-form, these women-teachers were quoted as authorities and to-day every book on the subject contains the names of numerous women as the first transmitters of them.

From the 9th century, when most of the books on the subject were compiled, women students took to the serious study of these works and were recognised as authorities on Hadis. Many men sat at their feet and gained precious store of knowledge from them.

The number of these literary women, by and by, increased immensely. Civil war, rebellion and rising came like storm and passed away; dynasties of rulers were founded and overthrown; every now and then the peace of the people was disturbed; but the determination of women for intellectual pursuit remained unshaken. Thus in the 11th century when the authority of the Caliph of Islam was completely shaken, the authority of learned women was recognised throughout the Islamic world; many of the learned men of the time, like Al-Khatib of Baghdad, the well-known biographer, Abul-Mahasin of Egypt, the famous historian, Al-Humaydi, the celebrated Traditionist of Spain and various other learned men of the time were men who had received their education from a learned woman of Persia, named Shuhada, whose fame had travelled through Egypt up to Spain. In the 12th century, Ibn Asakir, the great biographer who had compiled a biographical dictionary in eighty volumes, which is still extant, had among his teachers more than eight women. In the 13th century when the Caliphate of Baghdad was shaken to its very foundation and the last Caliph of the Abbaside dynasty was put to death by the Tartars, many women distinguished themselves as authorities on different subjects. In the 14th century one author alone has mentioned the names of more than 170 literary women with most of whom he himself had read. In the next two centuries also a large number of women gained great reputation as teachers of law, literature and Traditions (Hadis). Short biographical notices of many of them are found in

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the biographical dictionaries compiled by the two famous authors of these two centuries—Al-Sakhawi and Ibn Fahd, who had the privilege of sitting at the feet of these fair teachers.

From the 17th century, however, the taste for learning appears to have declined among the Muslim women. None of the biographical dictionaries of this period contains the name of any woman of any literary merit. But all of a sudden in the 18th century again we come across the name of a very distinguished Muslim woman, Fatima al-Fudayliyya, who was celebrated for her mastery of Traditions, Law and Calligraphy. About the end of her life she had migrated to Mecca where her residence became a rendezvous of students and learned men; and official Jurists of the Hanafite as well as of the Shafite schools often called on her in order to consult her on legal problems. She had copied a large number of important books and collected a good library which at the end she gave over for public use.

The high standard of the attainments and culture of the Muslim women of the middle ages is shown clearly not only by the literary, historical, and biographical works of the time which have come down to us, but are also reflected in the belles-lettres of the time. The books of stories and tales which throw immense light on the various aspects of life in the period to which they belong, contain clear proofs of the high standard of the general culture of the Muslim women of high society. Here I will refer to only one of these stories. Those who have perused the entertaining pages of the Arabian Nights, must be familiar with the story of the slave girl Tawaddud, for whom the Caliph Haroun-al-Rashid promised to pay the high price demanded by her bankrupt master, only if she could answer successfully all the questions which might be put to her by the specialists

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in the various subjects. The offer was accepted. The most celebrated Professors of Theology, Law, Medicine, Astronomy, Philology, Rhetoric, Chess, etc., questioned her one after another, on their special subjects; and in each case the girl not only gave completely satisfactory replies to all the questions but also at the end put to her examiner a question which he was unable to answer. The story, as Lane has remarked, is by its very nature tiresome and cumbrous. It must also be full of imaginary materials. But at the same time it cannot be denied that it throws a flood of light on the intellectual equipment of a woman of high society at the time.

As Lecturers

Be as it may there is no doubt that the literary Muslim women of the middle ages had not been content with their own personal passive intellectual achievements but took active part in the intellectual and educational movements of the time. They delivered regular courses of lectures in important educational institutions and their lectures were attended by a large crowd of students, men as well as women, coming from different lands. The biographical accounts of these women explicitly point out that they delivered lectures on important books on Traditions, Law and Literature, and mention the names of the books which they taught. The certificates which were secured from them by their men students and have come down to us, contain their names as teachers. Ibn Batuta, the famous traveller, has mentioned in his book the names of some of them and says that he had attended their lectures at Damascus.

There are also still extant several manuscripts which contain the names of their teachers and of their students as well as the time and place when and where the lectures on these books were delivered. Many of these manuscripts contain the names of women as

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teachers or as students. Three such manuscripts are preserved in the Khoda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library of Patna. In one of them the names of more than fifty women are mentioned who attended a regular course of lectures, side by side with about four hundred men students (whose names are also mentioned), in the Muzaffariyya Madrasa in the year 687 A.H. (1288 A.D.). On another page of the same manuscript there are recorded the names of more than a dozen women who together with about 40 men students attended a course of lectures on the book in a Madrasa in Aleppo in the year 736 A.H. (1335 A.D.) A note on another page of this very manuscript shows that a woman named Ummu Abdallah delivered a course of lectures on it to a class of 50 students, including both men as well as women at Damascus, in the year 837 A.H. (1433 A.D.). The other two manuscripts also contain similar notes which show women either delivering regular courses of lectures side by side with their brethren in Madrasa Aziziya and Madrasa Diyaiyya in Damascus.

As Amazons

Muslim women, however, as I have already said, took part in all the walks of life. The history of Gujrat which has been edited by the well-known English Orientalist, Sir E. Denison Ross, contains a passage which says that Sultan Mahmud had trained women for various works and employed them in all his offices. They constituted his body-guard, and dressed and equipped like soldiers, accompanied him on his hunting expeditions.

It will, therefore, appear that the position of women in the various walks of life in the past, at least in the Orient, had not been one of which she need be ashamed to-day. Rather I would say that in certain parts of the East, at any rate, she had a proud record of intellectual eminence and social service.

THE NEW LEADERSHIP*

BY MISS MARYAM A. GHANI

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is hardly necessary to say that the subject we have been discussing here this evening is of vital importance to humanity to-day. No sensible man can fail to see that the current standards and values and the current outlook on life are fast driving us to a social and cultural collapse. Every responsible person will readily admit that there is something very seriously wrong with our outlook on life, and, if I am asked to say where the trouble lies, I shall unhesitatingly declare "It is in the policy that has gone on successively for several generations of secularising the outlook of people." Unfortunately, the intellectual emancipation of the West came after a severe struggle with the religious authorities. The result was the increasing contempt with which religion came to be regarded by the intellectuals. Our mutual relationship and social behaviour began to be guided, no longer by any absolute moral standard, as previously, when we were wedded to a spiritual outlook on life, but by standards of the material world. With what result, I need hardly tell you.

The new leadership should, therefore, apply itself heart and soul to the consideration of the question—Is not a return urgent to the forsaken spiritual outlook; the outlook which points to a life beyond and above the limited sphere of matter; the outlook which affirms that sacrifice is a higher law than assertiveness; the outlook that upholds mortification and repentance as a higher principle than self-justification?

In turning its attention towards the religious outlook on life, the new leadership should also take cognisance of the fact that led our forefathers to renounce it

*A lecture delivered on behalf of Islam at a public meeting of the Inter-Religious Fellowship (Youth Section), held at the Garden Club Hall, London.

THE NEW LEADERSHIP

for the secular outlook. Indeed, there is a bad side to the best of things, and even such an essentially wholesome thing as religion has its bad side.

No one can deny that a perverted idea of religion has, at times, proved disastrous to the cultural and social interests of mankind, as it did for a long time in the West. There are two particular vices connected with this perverted religious outlook which frightened the previous generations of Westerners. One was the narrow-minded intolerance which religion had for so long bred in people's minds and which has not yet quite departed from certain sections of religious people wielding influence in society. The new religious outlook which we should hold up before humanity should be absolutely free from this separatist and exclusive tendency. Just as individuals tolerate other individuals with their peculiarities, religions should tolerate other religions and their peculiarities. The idea of uniformity in religious beliefs and practices should be discarded as an absurd theory. Yet we should strive to establish what may be called unity of religions, or, rather, unity of religious-minded peoples. We should not forget that it is not in their aspirations that the religions differ, but rather in their programmes. Even the matter of programmes may not prove so difficult as it would appear at first sight, provided it be discussed in an atmosphere of mutual fellowship and trust. If we try to justify our respective programmes, not merely by dogmatic assertions but by logical reasons based on palpable experiences, it is surely possible that, before long, we shall be far nearer a uniform religious creed and practice than we can otherwise hope to be. Pending that attempt, we can clarify the turbid atmosphere of inter-religious ill-will, for our present purposes, by laying down certain rules of conduct for our rejuvenated religious outlook on life.

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The first of these must be a belief in a universal God for all mankind, Who is impartial to all the nations and races of the world. The idea of a national God and chosen peoples must go. Instead, we have to foster the idea that no one nation has any destiny apart from the united and co-operative destiny of mankind.

Secondly, we have to recognise the distinctive spiritual achievements of all the different nations of the world, and to try to harmonize them in a united spiritual force for the world. For this purpose, it is necessary that the new leader should pay indiscriminate homage to the genuine spiritual traditions of all nations. Thirdly, religious preachings and discussions under the new movement for religion should be replete with that dignity and, more especially, that purity that is expected of such a sacred subject. The atmosphere of our discussion, far from being inferior to other atmospheres, should be superior to them in every respect. Consequently, there should be no incivility, no want of forbearance, in any manner, in our debates and discussions, sermons and exhortations. While making our remarks about their beliefs and practices, we must have due regard for the susceptibilities of those brothers who differ from us. We must, for one thing, show the utmost respect to those personalities or objects that are revered by our fellow pilgrims of a different camp.

I think that if we succeed in observing these principles, we shall without fail be the unifying factor that we are expected to be. This, however, is not all. We are not only to unite humanity but to make it progressive, and the seed of this latter flower has already been sown in the principles set forth above.

If religious ideas and practices are open to scientific examination, they cannot consistently be opposed to scientific thinking. Unfortunately, religion has been

PRECIOUS GEMS

guilty, at least once in history, of persecuting scientific speculations. And this is the second reason why the intellectuals are so averse to the study and discussion of religion to-day. We cannot afford to forget, in the interest of an all-round development of man, that just as Physical Science gives us the knowledge of the laws governing the physical world, so religion undertakes to give us the knowledge of the laws that are working in the moral and spiritual world.

If the same God who has created the physical world is also the Creator of the moral and spiritual world, these two worlds must have a resemblance and unity—the one must verify the other and there should be no suggestion of the one contradicting the other. In other words, a true religious spirit, rather than viewing Science as a menace to its own existence, should regard it as its supplement and justifier.

PRECIOUS GEMS

SAYINGS OF MUHAMMAD

1. The Faithful (*i.e.* Muslims) are those who perform their trust, fail not in their word, and keep their pledge.
2. Verily Allah loveth a Muslim who is poor with a family and withholdeth himself from what is unlawful and from begging.
3. Humility and courtesy are acts of virtue.
4. No man hath believed perfectly until he wisheth for his brother that which he wisheth for himself.
5. Help thy brother in adversity, and redeem him if he go astray.
6. A virtuous wife is a man's best treasure.
7. The worst of men is a bad learned man, and a good learned man is the best.
8. He who believeth in one God and life hereafter, let him not injure his neighbours.
9. Pray to Allah morning and evening, and employ the day in your avocations.
10. The upper hand (that bestoweth) is better than the lower (that receiveth).

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CORRESPONDENCE

TO MR. J. H. B.,
KEMP TOWN.

DEAR SIR,

I am in due receipt of your letter and I have carefully noted the contents.

Briefly, the answers to your questions are as follows:

A Muslim is bound to believe as much in Jesus as in Muhammad. One who makes the slightest distinction between one religious teacher and another cannot be a true Muslim according to the Holy Qur-án, our Scripture. As a matter of fact, we have first to believe in the mission of Jesus before we can be followers of Muhammad. In accepting Muhammad we only broaden our allegiance and not transfer it from one Prophet to another.

According to the Holy Qur-án, Jesus (peace be on him) was, indeed, the promised Messiah, promised by the Jewish Prophets of old, but as the Messiah he could only be a human Prophet, and not a Divine incarnation. As a matter of fact, Jesus never claimed to be a part of Divinity. He used the words "Son of God" in the spiritual sense, the sense in which all holy men are "sons of God," while all sinful men are "sons of the Devil." He himself explained this when the Jews accused him of blasphemy.

According to the Qur-án, also, Jesus did not die on the Cross. As a commissioned officer of God he could not die at the hands of sinful men. He was put to the Cross, but was saved by his Almighty God from the accursed death which could only come to a sinful man, according to the Scriptures. The story of the Crucifixion and the disappearance from the grave, as it is given in the Gospels, supports this statement of the Qur-án. If you desire to study the subject in detail, we shall be pleased to send you relevant books.

You are right. Man cannot save man. It is God alone Who can save man. But God has His own dignified ways of saving man. A king can save his subjects from starvation, from punishment, and even from death, but not by starving himself and hanging himself on the gallows. Certainly Almighty God should be credited with more resourcefulness than an earthly king. God can very well save man by revealed public guidance, by the examples of holy persons like the prophets who are purity itself, and by individual guidance through Prayer. Historically, it is these three factors that have been working for the redemption of human nature from Sin. With all the zeal for his Church religion, no Christian can claim that his Church theories of Incarnation and Atonement by blood have ever substantially worked for the redemption of the human mind from sinfulness.

Hell as it is referred to in the Qur-án is not a place of eternal damnation, neither is it a place representing the wrath of God. As you rightly think, the sorrow, suffering and tragedy of unsatisfied desires are enough punishment for sinners. But, as you will agree, here in this life the diversions of worldly life do not

CORRESPONDENCE

allow us to realise these spiritual sufferings. Unless we realise them to the full we cannot have that perfected repentance which alone can cleanse our minds and fill them with Divine Knowledge. The Qur-ānic Hell is this device for the soul to realize its spiritual miseries—to bring about that true repentance which draws the Mercy of God. Although this is a temporary measure, its sufferings, nevertheless, are painful—they are, indeed, more painful than physical sufferings. Physical pains and sufferings tend to deaden at a certain point. But spiritual pain grows persistently till the mind is purified of all its dross. God, therefore, in His mercy, wishes to save us from this torment—hence His warning.

Forces that tend to make man arrogant and extravagant constitute the devil according to the Qur-ān. According to the same Sacred Book, we need not worry about its existence. It is, in a way, useful to us as mortal beings. If there is no pull from the opposite direction, virtue means no struggle, and hence *has no merit*. But this being only a negative aspect of our character, we are asked by the Qur-ān to ignore its very existence, and to concentrate our minds on such forces as tend to incline us towards virtuous actions, and are called angels. We are to apply our mental energies to absorbing these forces as much as we can. It is futile to attempt to discover the history of their creation, considering that so far we have not been able to discover the history even of our own species. The fact is that theories on these questions are of no earthly use to us. So the Qur-ān does not propose to give us the history of our creation. All that it does affirm is that the Universe was a gradual development, and that our physical body owes its existence to the Earth. It does not speak of the first man; instead it gives us a description of the possibilities and the drawbacks of human nature.

Yours being an earnest soul, I am confident that it will find the path of Peace, particularly when you are so regular in your prayers. "More things are wrought by Prayer than we can dream of." Your disposition is as clean as that of an ideal Muslim's should be. Your spirit is that of Islam—namely of resignation and surrender to the Divine Will. This is the spirit which all teachers of religion—Moses, Krishna, Confucious, Jesus, Buddha and Muhammad—exemplify in their lives and inculcate in their teachings. Muhammad being the latest of these teachers, and the one the records of whose life and teachings are the freest from the ravages of time, is the safest to follow in cultivating this spirit. We could send you a copy of the Holy Qur-ān, Muhammad's Scripture, if you so desire. You need not be puzzled at the oriental colour of your thoughts. All sincere Christians should be Eastern-minded (if the phrase be permitted) seeing that their spiritual inspiration comes from an Easterner—Jesus—on whom be Peace.

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,
Imam.

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ST. ALBANS.

To

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for the interesting literature that you have sent to me.

At present I am studying it, and should I require any further information, I shall be glad to avail myself of your offer, and communicate with you again.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) A. E. G.

SHEFFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

You promised, when in Sheffield last Thursday, to send me books on the Islamic religion. Will you please send same, as I am anxious to read them in English?

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) A. M. H.

MANCHESTER.

To

HIS EXCELLENCY
SHEIKH HAFIZ WAHBA,
42, EATON PLACE, S.W. 1.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Pardon me for taking the liberty of writing to you. I desire to make a few enquiries.

I am an English gentleman interested in foreign countries. I am especially interested in your religion. Although a member of the Church of England, I have studied the Qur-án and the Muslim religion.

Could Your Excellency let me know whether there is a Church belonging to your religion either in Manchester or on the South Side. If so, will you kindly let me have the full address, as I feel I would like to go and see it. In case there is no Church of your religion in Manchester, kindly let me know whether there is any chance of my becoming a member of any of your religious Societies. If so, I feel I would like to become an honorary member. I would also like to have a copy of your Qur-án. A long time ago, I read several passages in this book which greatly enlightened me—especially the passages on Mary and the one on the Birth of Christ. I also know that you worship the God of the Universe, and call Him Allah. I would like a copy of the Qur-án with photos. Kindly also let me know the times for the Prayers. If you could let me know these particulars, I should like to hear from Your Excellency by return. I shall be very thankful to hear from Your Excellency.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) C. A. N.

CORRESPONDENCE

CHERTSEY.

DEAR IMAM,

I have this day written to the Roman Catholic Priest to inform him that my religion is Islam, and I am a Muslim. I have done this to make my position clear to him. As he has some people known as "Legion of Mary" going round to make a census of Catholics, I have told him I am not one now. They are trying to hunt the people to Church. I think they are coming down here. So I shall probably have some controversy with them. However, I had to come out openly on the side of Islam.

Yours sincerely,
D. J. COURTNAGE.

15th February, 1937.

This is a copy of what I wrote to the representative of Priest-craft:

DEAR SIR,

As regards census of Catholics, please do not count me as one. I have changed my views about religion. My present religion is Islam, and I am a Muslim.

I am writing this to make my position quite clear. I felt I could not explain all this to the people who may be calling at the door.

Please excuse paper.

Yours truly,
D. J. COURTNAGE.

TRENTON, U. S. A.

MY DEAR IMAM,

For the past few years I have been a student of Islamic History.

To me Islam is a Universal Religion, as Islam disregards political, geographical and social divisions, thus creating a mutual understanding among its adherents. Islam is a religion of social equality, and, through its democratic principles, it permits its followers to achieve many objects which otherwise would not be procured.

I have had the great pleasure of dining with Muslims, and I have observed that the opulent and the indigent Muslims dine together, and the Muslim austerity of equality again rules.

In no other religious sect have I ever observed such equality, courtesy, and, above all, fraternal environment.

At any time that I can be of any service to you in my country, I shall be only too glad to fulfil your request.

On numerous occasions I have defended the Muslim Arabs against vilifying remarks. And so long as the omnipotent Jehovah grants me the privilege of uttering a few words I shall defend Islam and the son of Abdullah and Amina.

Yours truly,
SOL. PHILLIPS.

14th February, 1937.

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LONDON, W. 8.

DEAR IMAM,

Very many thanks for your gracious hospitality, which was so enjoyed by all those who were privileged to participate in the celebration of the Eid-al-Azha. To be present was an inspiration to me and our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson.

Your long-to-be-remembered address placed the attainment of world friendship upon a new spiritual, yet practical, basis, I hope that it may be printed and widely circulated and made known to the Christian world, for which Islam has a lofty and much-needed message.

Your words were sublime and moving, and we are the richer in spirit for having heard them.

With kindest regards and renewed thanks.

Yours sincerely,

LOTUS DUDLEY.

22nd February, 1937.

HERNE HILL, LONDON, S. E. 24.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER IN ISLAM,

Assalam-o-alaikum.

May I express my regret at being unable to attend the Festival held last Sunday and may I express my steadfastness in Islam, and my respects to the Imam.

I would like to relate also an incident which has its value. My son, age eleven, attends a Church school in London. On being asked by his teacher what his religion was, fearlessly, and before his schoolmates he replied, "Muslim." When asked "Why?" he answered, "because my father is one, and I want to be one also." I had to explain to the boy that he had to merit the honour of being a Muslim, and as he expressed the wish to be one, I explained the meaning of the vow he would have to take when he became old enough to understand its full meaning. This brought home to me the influence of parents on children, and I was very pleased to find him showing more than an ordinary interest in Islam, and I hope that interest is only the seed which will ultimately bring him to realization and grow with him.

Yours fraternally,

WM. B. MUSHAM.

25th February, 1937.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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If England had turned Muslim

With this headline, the *South Wales Evening Post*, in its issue of 5th December 1936, reported a speech given by Mr. Richard Hughes, the well-known Welsh writer and traveller. At a meeting organised by the Swansea and Llanelly Historical Society at Oxford Street School, Swansea, Mr. Richard Hughes was reported to have asked a large audience the following question: "What would have happened if England had been converted to Mohammedanism (Islam—ED.) under King John?" At the end of a carefully reasoned lecture, he arrived at these principal conclusions. Conversion to Islam would not have made much difference to the religious life of the country; England would have adapted its new faith to suit its national character, village Imams would play cricket on Saturdays, there would probably be no Church bells.

We readily agree with the speaker that Islam would not affect the non-essential features of the English national life, but it would certainly have introduced changes in the vital social relations of the people, saving them from vices such as drinking and gambling and from sexual perversions. These changes, however, *will* come consequent upon a new and enlightened spiritual outlook and not as a brutally-enforced system such as Communism or Fascism.

England would have been modernised 300 years ago

Further on, the speaker is reported to have said: "On the other hand, it would have resulted in the advance of science by 300 years, and our present mechanical triumphs would have been gained in the time of Queen Elizabeth." "This assertion," the report states, "he justified by pointing out the enormous importance of the Arabic numeric system, without which calculation was almost impossible. The great part of modern engineering and science was based," he said, "on mathematics."

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We should add that England would, in that case, have given a lead to the European nations, how to combine progress in science with that spirit of religiosity, the absence of which is fast leading the present civilization to its doom. It is common knowledge that, whereas the Islamic religion acted as a mother to the Physical Sciences and therefore had nothing to fear from their development and progress, Christianity, devoid as it is of the rational religious appeal, has always dreaded those sciences, and has, moreover, lost ground with their rising tides.

King John's Offer

Still further the report says: "To postulate a Muslim Britain was not as fantastic as might at first seem. King John actually made a proposal to the Sultan of Morocco that he should agree to quell the former's baronial troubles, in return for which the King would convert himself and the country to the Mohammedan Church (Islamic Faith—ED.).

We rejoice that the Sultan of Morocco decided not to introduce his religion into England by this sordid method of barter. The Muslim in him did not allow him to create a Constantine or a Charlemagne for Islam in England. It is, however, evident from this historical incident that kings in those days, particularly in Europe, could very easily change the faith of their subjects, but it is to the eternal credit of Islam that it did not earn for itself that reproach which is associated with Christianity in the West. To-day Islam, shorn of its political glories, is offering itself to the European nations in general, and to the English people in particular, as a great spiritual reconstructive force. Will the people of Europe, remembering the nobility and the past generosity of Islam, give it a warm welcome for their own benefit? That is the question we ask of the Europeans to-day, and that is the question implied in the courageous and opportune lecture by Mr. Hughes.

BOOK REVIEWS

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AL-HADIS.—An English translation of the well-known *Mishkat-al-Masabih with suitable arrangements of Chapters and sections.* By *Al-Hajj Moulvi Fazl Karim, M.A., B.L., Bengal Civil Service (Judicial), India.*

A novel and wonderful adventure in Islamic literature! The Holy Qur-án has been translated into English by many authors hitherto, but none has taken the trouble to translate completely the traditional utterances of the universal Prophet. It is remarkable that the precious gems which fell from his prophetic lips for the guidance of mankind were long hidden from the English-speaking world, as a result of which the greatest Prophet of Islam was vilified by Western writers. Now has come the dawn of a new era, and with its dawn, the teachings of the Prophet should be the key for the solution of world problems and the attainment of the highest ideals.

Chief Features of this Work.—The significance of this work lies in the importance which has always been attached to *Mishkat-al-Masabih*. The *Mishkat* has been exercising a most potent influence throughout the Muslim world, especially among the student class, because it contains traditions not only of *Sahih Bukhari* and *Muslim* but also of the remaining traditionists of *Sihah Sitta*. Therefore, it is more important than the *Sahihs* of *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. For casual and ordinary readers a chain of narratives appears to be cumbersome. They want only the texts for easy reference and consultation. *Mishkat* and its present translation fully supply these wants. When the authenticity of each tradition has already been established, there is no need for a series of narratives. It is for this reason that it is popular among students and the public, more popular

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than the Sahihs of Bukhari and Muslim which are too voluminous for easy consultation. The special feature of the present work is that attached to each section is an article dealing with the contents of Hadis on that particular topic, with references of the Qur-án and Hadis thereon. This is most useful for a student of religion. A slight deviation has been made in the case of classifications of subject-matter in order to give the most easy reference to readers. This will be seen from a study of the contents of this book and of the texts under each heading. The change is due to modern taste. The traditions which require to be placed in the forefront to safeguard the Muslims from the pitfalls and snares of modern society have been prominently placed under suitable classifications. Copious notes have been given below in order to explain difficult words and contexts. The apparently conflicting views of different traditions on the same subject have been clearly explained.

Superiority of this Work.—There is another English translation of Mishkat-al-Masabih, by Captain A. N. Matthew (1810) which is only a free translation, sometimes twisted and changed to suit European minds. It is risky for Muslims to read as it is perverted and changed. Besides, it is now out of print. There is (in English) no other complete work on traditions.

Therefore the importance of this work cannot be overestimated. There are (in the first volume) more than 2,000 traditions, 850 foot-notes and nearly 135 articles. The work has been completed in four volumes, containing more than 2,000 pages and 4,500 traditions, of which nearly 2,500 are narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, the remainder being by other traditionists of repute.